

Historic Districts Commission

New Construction Policy Statement

When reviewing any application for New Construction, the HDC will assume that the proposed structure has been sited at the existing elevation and using the existing grading of the site unless specifically called out as an element of the new design on both the Application and Construction Checklist. Significant changes in grade are strongly discouraged. The addition of new fill to raise the overall height of a property and/or to create a level site constitutes a change in the setting of the property that is a design element of the new construction and must be included on both the Application and the Construction Checklist.

All changes to the existing grade require that the following be submitted for review:

1. A clear and complete site plan - at 1"=20'-0" or as directed - which includes any retaining walls, paving, lights, mailboxes, etc. to be installed or altered as part of the new construction;
2. A grading plan that clearly shows existing and proposed grades;
3. A minimum of two site grade sections (cross and long, and through the structures) extending from property line to property line which show the existing and proposed grade and any proposed structures.

No approvals will be issued for any new construction until the Commission has received a certified site plan prepared by a Massachusetts registered land surveyor showing the existing and finished topographies at one-foot contours.

In the case of the potential development of multiple adjacent sites, the Commission will review the project as a whole and will not review any individual element without consideration of the overall plan. Applicants are required to provide information on the size, location, height and general design of all buildings proposed as part of their initial application for New Construction or Alteration. Review of any one parcel will not begin until the Commission is satisfied that they have enough information on the project as a whole to understand the scope of the project. Applicants should work directly with Commission Staff in reviewing the extent of materials and plans required for review.

Any changes to the site which are not specifically called out in the application, construction checklist and plans submitted are considered to be not approved even if those elements are necessary to construct otherwise approved elements of the project. For example, if the design of an approved building assumes that the grade will be changed but no such change is noted in the application, then the grade change cannot be made and the structure cannot be built as approved.

Septic systems are integral to the design of many new houses and it is important that the HDC understand where and how a new system will be installed. Systems which require septic mounds or other changes in grade have a direct impact on the character of a site and require the HDC's specific review and approval as part of the review of any new construction. Systems which can be installed without visibly altering the landscape do not require approval but should be discussed as part of the project review.

No approval for New Construction will be issued until the HDC has received and reviewed a complete set of architectural building plans at 1/4" = 1'-0" scale, to include:

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- a. All Floor Plans (Basement, First Floor, Second Floor, Attic Floor and the Roof), with exterior dimensions and gross area in SF for each floor; and,
- b. All 4 Elevations, a Cross and a Long Section, with horizontal reference lines depicting grades at finished floor levels, including at the top of the ridge. A vertical line across the horizontal reference lines must show the actual floor to floor heights. All elevations and sections must show the existing and proposed finished grades.

A landscape plan may also be required but should not be combined with, or substituted for, the certified site plan prepared by a Massachusetts registered Land Surveyor, noted above. A model or models may be requested.

All height and building dimensional calculations must be measured based upon the existing elevation of the site prior to the start of any construction on the site.

The Commission may require a streetscape plan as part of New Construction reviews. This plan should show the proposed new building as it will appear in relation to any surrounding structures and/or significant features of the District. Such plans must be correctly dimensioned and scaled in accordance with the above requirements and must show existing and proposed grading.

Applicants cannot assume that any prior review or approval issued by another Board or Division of the Town constitutes an approval by the HDC. HDC Approvals are only granted when applications are specifically submitted for that purpose. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to review the relevant property files; to confirm the status of any required approvals; and to provide the HDC with copies of any plans reviews or approvals issued by other Boards or Committees prior to the start of any project.

Approved April 23, 2015